

A
FAITHFULL
AND
Conscientious Account
For Subscribing the
ENGAGEMENT.

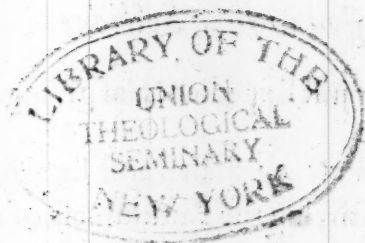
Discussed in four Sections.

1. Motives for just Expediency of giving such Account.
2. The Account truly Stated and Explained.
3. Reasons justifying the Faithfulness of it.
4. Objections against it, satisfactorily Answered

GAL. 6. 4. *But let every man prove his own worke, and then shall he have rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another.*

ACT. 24. 16. *And herein do I exercise my self to have alwayes a Conscience voyd of offence toward God and toward men.*

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To the Right VVorshipful Mr. Mayor,
Aldermen and Inhabitants of Shrewsbury,
fearing God, and faithfull to the Common-wealth of
England; Together with my ancient Neighbours, and Christi-
an acquaintance in Cheshire, Lancashire, and other
parts: Love and Peace with Holinffe be
multiplied unto you.

*Most endeared Fathers and Brethren in the Lord
Christ.*



Inasmuch as subscribing the Engage-
ment required by Act of Parliament, is
very unworthily contradicted, and un-
justly censured; not only by some men
of corrupt minds and perverse spirits, but
also by some eminent persons professing
the truth which is after godlinesse, as if a declaring & pro-
mising to be true and faithfull to the Common-wealth of
England, as it is now established without a King, and house
of Lords, were unlawfull. It hath therefore seemed good
unto me, (who am concerned herein, as well as other pru-
dent and piously conscientious Christians throughout the
Nation) to give a just and faithful account of the Reasons
grounded on the Word of God, perswading and sway-
ing to ingage. This my undertaking is also the rather in
the behalf, and for the sake of severall sorts of people, I
being desirous according to the will of God, as oportu-
nity and capacity serveth, to do good unto all; albeit,
more especially to the household of faith. Because some
are, viz.

1. Malig-

1. Malignant adversaries, who cease not to withstand and calumniate just waies, and to speak evill of them that walk therein, as evill doers; even these enemies of righteousness, have notwithstanding some offices of neighbourly love, and Christian duty owing to them from Christs Disciples, which ought to be performed. See *Mat.* 5. 44. that so they may be convinced, and made ashamed, and their ignorance may be put to silence, (*1 Pet.* 2. 15. & 3. 16.) if peradventure they may repent, and obtaine pardon of their sin. See *Act.* 8. 22.

2. Sullen malecontents, and refractory despisers of present Government, transported by a spirit of delusion; who unavoidably taking notice of the Viall of Gods Wrath powred upon the Sun, *i. e.* probably, on an eminent nominall Protestant Prince, but adhering fixedly to Romish Hierarchy, rooted in Popery, so as they are scorched with heat, and gnaw their tongues for pain, and think they do well to be angry even to death, not repenting of their deeds, nor giving glory to God. Who knoweth whether it may yet please God, that these may not hearken to that divine exhortation, *Zech.* 2. 13. *Be silent O all flesh before the Lord, for he is raised up out of his holy habitation; Yea, and take up the acclamation of the Angell of the waters, Rev.* 16. 5, 6, 7. *Thou art righteous O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus; For they have shed the blood of Saints and Prophets, and thou hast given them bloud to drink, for they are worthy. And of another Angell, Even so Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgements.*

3. Novices, and unskilfull persons newly entered into the way of Christianity, who are as children, and have not so fully attained the Spirit of Love, of Power, and of a sound mind, nor yet are of capacity by use to exercise
their

their senses in discerning both good and evill, (*Heb.* 5. 13. 14.) such ought to be dealt withall respectively and tenderly, and by some manuduction guided in their way, even as a nurse cherisheth her children in their minority. See *Isa* 66. 12, 13. *Hos.* 11. 3. 1 *Thes.* 2. 7.

4. Scrupulous questionists, and conflicting Christians in the school and field of spirituall warfare, who being assaulted by the lustfull devices of their owne deceitfull hearts, and also by Satan, and his Agents co-operating suggestions, may stand in need of brotherly and fellow souldierly assistance, and mutuall encouragement. See *Gal.* 5. 17. 1 *John* 2. 13, 14. Even as the brave Captaine Generall *Joab* did most prudently in a Councel of War, advertise his brother *Abishai* in the warre against the Syrians and Ammonites, 2 *Sam* 10. 9. 10, 11, 12.

5. Fathers and growne men in Christianity, established in the truth, which is after godlinesse, who are come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Sonne of God, and a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulnesse of Christ, *Ephes.* 4. 13. even these may be excited and encouraged to glorifie God in their beholding the unanimity of their brethren, in their actings according to the uncontrollable principles of the sacred Scriptures, of both the Old and New Testament, See *Exod.* 20. 12. *Rom.* 13. 1. compared with *Galat.* 1. 23. 24.

6. The Supreme Powers, and Fathers of our Native Countrey, may hence take knowledge for their greater encouragement, (who have enacted Parliamentarily the subscribing of the Engagement) in their well-governing; that the Christians subject to their Authority, doe with good reason submit themselves to a due compliance therein, and are ready to render just grounds of their so obeying

beying in the Lord, according to the rule of Scripture. See
Mat. 22. 21. Titus 3. 1.

This my plain and upright-hearted endeavour, I doe humbly offer and dedicate to your prudent and impartial censures and parronage, who according to the knowledge you have experienced of my doctrine and conversation amongst you, are most able and meet to judge what I say, and in proving all things, to hold fast that which is good, as indeed ye ought. See *1 Cor. 10. 15. 1 Thes. 5. 21.* My reciprocall and obliged Engagement mutually, I chuse to expresse in the very words of the blessed Apostle *Paul*, even as he testified his love and faithfulnessse to the Saints at Corinth. See *2 Cor. 1. 12, 13.* *My rejoicing is this the testimony, of my conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity, not with fleshy wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you wards.* For I write none other things unto you, then what you read, or acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge, even to the end. Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepheard of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting Covenant: Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wel-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, To whom be glory for ever and ever. *Amen.* So prayeth,

Your servant in the Lord for Jesus sake,

Thomas Paget.



A

Faithful & Conscientious Account

For Subscribing the

ENGAGEMENT.

SECT. I.

Motives and Grounds for the Reasonableness and Expediency of giving Account herein.

1. **M**oses and the Prophets in the sacred Historical Scriptures (*written for our instruction and admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come, Rom. 15. 4. 1 Cor. 10. 11.*) declaring the true state and Occurrences of Old Testament Times, do give a just and faithful Account of their own faithful and warrantable Deportment; and likewise of the faithful Deportment of others, the good Servants of God in their generations occasionally made mention of by them, *viz.* of Noah, Abraham, David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, &c. This is so plainly written throughout their Books, that a man may run and read the same: To allude to *Habak. 2. 2.* And surely they saw a reasonableness and expediency in so doing; *they being holy men of God, and writing as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 1. 20, 21.*

2. The Apostles and Evangelists, who wrote the Historial Scriptures respecting the state of New Testament Times, (which being compared with Old Testament Times, are stiled times of Reformation, *Heb. 9. 10.*) they also do give a clear and perfect Account, not only of Evangelical Doctrine (*the truth which is after godliness, Tit. 1. 1.*) but also of particular occasional Acts, wherein they were exemplary for our Imitation, and following in the same, *Iohn 20. 31. Luk. 1. 1, 2, 3, 4. Act. 1. 1.* As may most fully appear in a short view of the two remarkable Instances, beyond all exception; *Viz.*

1. Instance, Touching our most blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, our Spiritual King and Prophet, his worthy acting and walking excepted against:

1. By Pharisees, for his *eating with Publicans and sinners*, *Mat. 9. 11, 12, 13.*
2. By the Disciples of John Baptist, about frequent fasting, *Chap. 9. 14. 15, 16, 17.*
3. By the multitudes, concerning John Baptists and his own Ministry, *Chap. 11. 7, &c.*
4. By the Pharisees, about the Traditions of the Elders, *Chap. 15. 1, to 15.*
5. By his own Disciples, ignorant of the meaning of Parables, *Chap. 15. 15, to 21.*
6. By the Herodians and Pharisees, about tribute to Caesar, *Chap. 22. 15, to 22.* In all these it is requisite that *Wisdom should be justified of her children*: See *Mat. 11. 19.*

2. Instance, Touching Apostolical Practises and Actings in the first and purest Primitive Times, who were vindicated therein, albeit they were contradicted:

1. By mockers at the *fulness of the Holy Ghost* given, *Acts 2. 13, 14, &c.*
2. By people wondering at the *cure of an impotent man*, *Chap. 3. 11, 12.*
3. By Rulers, Elders and Scribes, touching the same thing, *Chap. 4. 5, 8.*
4. By them of the Circumcision about the *Gentiles Conversion*, *Chap. 11. 2, 3, 4.*

3. By certain men from *Judea*, about *Observation of Circumcision*, *Acts* 15. 1, &c.
6. By the Athenians, concerning the *Resurrection*, Chap. 17. 16, 17, to the end.
7. See also more specially and fully the perfect Account of the Apostle *Paul* himself, touching the main of his actions, *Acts* 22. &c. to the end of the book.
3. There is a cloud of Witnesses, even of the Greek and Latin ancient Fathers, viz. *Justine Martyr*, *Athenagorus*, *Tertullian*, &c. (It may seem vain to amuze the Reader with a Catalogue of their Names, and Titles of their Books, respecting this matter,) who gave good Account of their Christian Actions against *Pagans*, and *Heretics* of various sorts, and otherwise also, as emergent cause and occasion called for, plentifully testified in their useful learned Writings.
4. In the several Centuries, when gross *Antichristianism* domineered for the most part throughout all *Europe*, then God had his faithful Witnesses notwithstanding, who did substantially and courageously withstand and testify against the same, *Apocal.* 11. 3. This is most singularly evidenced by the industrious Collection of the *Magdeburg Centurists*, by Mr *John Fox* in his book of Martyrs, by the noble French Lord *Philip Mornay*, in his History of the *Mystery of Iniquity*, its progress and opposition; by Doctor *Usher*, in his Latin Treatise of the *State and Succession of Christian Churches*, &c.
5. When our *English Nation* came out of *Spiritual Babylon*, the *Mother of Harlots*, and *Abominations of the Earth*, in the Reign of *Queen Elizabeth*, here was *John Jewel* returned from *Exile*, a most learned and renowned Confessor, who wrote an *Apology for the Church of England for her forsaking Rome in the Point of Doctrine*. Here was also learned and conscientious Mr *Thomas Cartwright*, *Udall*, and divers others, who excellently declared and demonstrated against *Hierarchy*, and *Romish Superstitious Ceremonies*, in their Judicious Treatises against the same.
6. In the beginning of *K. James* his Reign in *England* (some Overtures being for the reforming of *Discipline* and *divine Service*) there was arguing against *Corruptions in Discipline and Worship*

at the Hampton-Court-Conference by profound Dr *Reinolds*, Mr *Chadderton*, and Mr *Knewstubs*: And besides that, many godly learned and zealous *Ministers of Lincoln Diocese*, by themselves, of *Devonshire* and *Cornwall*, of *London*, and sundry other Counties, each by themselves, exhibited their solid Arguments against *Episcopacy* and *Superstitious Conformity*, yea much was effectually pleaded in this kind by Mr *Bradshaw*, Mr *Sherwood*, and other particular men.

7. After this Dr *Morton* becoming Prelate of *Chester* (looked on for great dexterity in *Papish Controversies*) he resolved to try his strength against the *Non-Conformists* in *Cheshire* and *Lancashire*, and to this purpose required some of them (which he singled out) to propound their Arguments against the *Cross in Baptism*, *Surplice*, and *Kneeling at the Communion*; which done by them, and yet they in no wise convinced: The said *Non-Conformists* (amongst whom the now Accountant was one) were commanded to give him their Arguments in writing; which they also did; yet he finding his endeavor fruitless in Conferences openly and privately, by how much they justified their Reasons, he then (as the event manifested) wrote a Book in defence of those three nocent *Ceremonies*: But howbeit the said *Non-Conformists* could not with liberty and safety reply unto his Books, (which otherwise they were ready unto,) yet God raised up pious and acute Dr *Ames* (who then was an *Exile* in the *United Netherlands*) to Reply unto it; yea and whereas Mr *Burges* (a Doctor in *Physick*, and sometimes himself a *Non-Conformist*, however he declined therefrom, through the ensnaring Iniquity of the Times, and became a conforming Minister) Rejoyned unto the Reply; yet the said Dr *Ames* commenced a fresh *Suit* against his Rejoynder for these Ceremonies, which as it is well known was an exceptible Service in those times to the suffering people of God, although it were barked against by the Prelatical Party.

8. Of late in K. *Charles* his Reign, swollen into extreame Tyranny, every one almost of any observation, may have taken knowledge of manifold notable and just *Declarations* and *Remonstrances* of *Parliament*, tending to undeceive the people; yea and manifold effectual *Petitions* and humble *Advertisements* to the *Parliament* from

from the Oppressed People throughout the Land, witnessing against Oppressions by arbitrary Power in the Civil and Ecclesiastical State, and submissly requesting and pleading for *Reformation*.

I X. In this present juncture of the perplexed scruples of many, by occasion of the required Subscribing the *Engagement*, There are some eminent men of well guided counsels, and composed temper of their publique spirits, who have given forth their judicious Considerations, endeavoring meekly and learnedly to give satisfaction to such as are studious to understand rightly in so grand a Case of Conscience as it is pretended to be.

X. And hence it is that the Premisses are effectual Motives (some Commissioners having been designed by the Supreme Power to take Subscription to the *Engagement* according to the Act of *Parliament*) unto the Accountant, having declared his submission to *Authority*, to declare also that he acteth according to right Reason satisfactory unto himself, and for the satisfying of others, who possibly may wonder and marvel, for want of information, at such his compliance.

SECT. II.

The Account it self truly stated, and clearly explained, in its genuine and proper sence.

THE form of *Subscription* to the *Engagement*, ordained by the Act of *Parliament*, is expressed in these words; viz. *I do declare and promise, that I will be true and faithful to the Commonwealth of England, as it is now established without a King, or House of Lords.* Howbeit it must needs be acknowledged, that this form of words hath a most easie and clear sence to any ordinary capacity, so as no doubt nor scruple can be contained in it: Yet notwithstanding, for our better making use and improvement of the certain and unquestionable meaning of it unto an effectual demonstration of its lawfulness and expediency, The Contents thereof shall be resolved into the four parts or branches, which are obviously remarkable, and each of them explained and considered by themselves: viz.

1. The

1. The particular condition of the person concerned and engaged.
2. The Act of subscribing in the peculiar nature thereof.
3. The object of this peculiar Act.
4. The modification and restriction of the object in its limits and bounds.

The Explanation of the Parts and Branches.

I. The condition of the person engaging, [I,] An English born Subject, receiving benefit and protection from this present Commonwealth, as it is now established, in the exercise of *Christianity*, and of my particular Calling unto the Ministry of the Gospel in a Pastoral charge.

Note. [That which is said touching the condition of the particular person in his Calling and Capacity specified, hath the same sence (*mutatis mutandis*) respecting all sorts of persons concerned in the *Engagement*, of what Calling, state, degree, and condition soever; whether they be Noblemen, Gentlemen, or Commons; whether they be subordinate Magistrates, Judges, Justices, Majors, Sheriffs, Bayliffs, or Constables; whether they be Lawyers, Physicians, Ministers, Schoolmasters, Souldiers, Merchants, Mariners, Tradersmen, Husbandmen, or Artificers; and whether their habitations are in Cities, Towns, or Villages, or whether of any other Province comprehended under the same Government.]

II. The Act of subscribing in the peculiar nature of it, is in this expression; [*I do Declare and Promise, that I will be true and faithful to &c.*] *Expla.* The nature and sum of this Act consisteth in the exercising of truth and faithfulness, and approving ones self therein as occasion offereth; in no wise giving way to an acting of falshood and Treachery against the Commonwealth; nor to an opposing or undermining the Peace of the English Nation under the present *Government* by any means; nor to a contriving or practising directly or indirectly any thing to the disturbance thereof: For to this effect the very Preamble of the Act of *Parliament* for subscribing the *Engagement*, hinteth the sence. *Vid. ibid.* And the Law-givers themselves are their own best Interpreters.

III. The Object of the Act of declaring and promising to be true and faithful, is, as it is expressed, [*The Commonwealth of England*

England.] Expla. Touching this branch, it may be observed for the better understanding of it, God that made the world, and hath made of one blood all Nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined all the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation, see *Act.* 17. 24. 26. he hath so ordered, and brought to passe, according to the counsell of his own will, *Eph.* 1. 11. that even Englishmen for many generations, have as a Nation lived Nationally in England, and been combined in a politike Body, or *Common wealth*, according to the Rights and Customes of this Nation, chosen and consented unto by the people hereof: Thus is the Common-wealth of England to be estimated.

I V. The Modification and Restriction of the object of the Act of subscribing, is limited and bounded in this expression, [*As the Common wealth of England is now established without a King and House of Lords.*] *Expla.* Concerning this last branch it may be observed, that the Common-wealth of England is now established without a King, and House of Lords, according to a Declaration of the Parliament, intituled, *A Declaration of the Parliament of England, expressing the grounds of their late proceedings, and of setting the present Government in the way of a free State:* This was Ordered, *March 17. 1648.* by the Commons in Parliament assembled, to be printed and published. And thus much briefly and perspicuously for the summe, and parts, and sense of the forme of the Engagement.

SECT. III.

Reasons asserting and justifying the faithfulness and conscionableness of Engagement.

I. REASON.

BEcause such subscribed Engagement is agreeable to the Law of nature and Nations revealed in the holy Scriptures, dictated and inspired by the Spirit of the God of Nature and Nations, who is our King and Law-giver, *Isai.* 33. 22. even the

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one onely Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy; see *Jam.* 4.12: compared with 2 *Tim.* 3.16. *Ergo*, It may and ought to be subscribed: This Reason shall be evidenced and illustrated according to the foure branches and parts observed in the Forme of Engagement.

1. The condition of the person subscribing, even one who is a Subject under this established present Government of the Common-wealth of England, and receiveth benefit and protection from the same, giveth good evidence and illustration to this first Reason: For it is both lawfull and requisite that any person, who is a Subject under any supreme power whatsoever, of what kind soever the power is, whether it be Monarchicall, Aristocraticall, or Democraticall, and of what Nation soever the person and subject is, it is necessary, I say, that such subject person be true and faithfull to such Supreme Power. This is demonstrable by an Induction of particular instances, *viz.*

1. *Ioseph* the son of the Patriark *Iacob*, an Hebrew fearing God, he by occasion living in Egypt, (having been sold thither) did not onely accept imployment under the Supreme Power there, but also was true and faithfull thereunto, yea, though Egypt was an house of bondage unto the Israelites, see *Gen.* 41. &c.

2. *Mordecai*, a truly religious Jew of the children of the captivity, did witnesse his truth and faithfulness unto the Persian Monarchy, by his ingenuous discovery of the treasonable and murderous designe of *Bigthan* and *Teresb*, two of the Kings Chamberlains against King *Ahasuerus*, reigning in Persia at that time; see *Esther* 2. 21, 22.

3. *Nehemiah*, an eminent servant of God, served *Artaxerxes* the King of Persia, and was true and faithfull unto the supreme Power, both in submitting unto, and observing of his directions and appointment; see *Neh.* 2. 6. & *cap.* 13. 6.

4. Our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ in the dayes of his flesh here on earth, declared his mind touching faithfulness to *Tiberius Caesar*, the Romane Emperor, being at that time supreme Commander over the Jewish Nation, so far as did concern

cern that his supreme power, whatever difficulties and confusions the Jewish Nation was involved into in those daies; see *Mat.* 22. 19, 20, 21.

5. The holy Apostle *Paul* approving his Apostleship to the Gentiles, as became him, instructeth the Christians at Rome to submit faithfully and conscientiously to the present supreme power there, though the Emperors in those times were monstrous and bloody usurping Emperors; see *Rom.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

6. The great Apostle *Peter* saw just cause that the brethren of the dispersion throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bythinia, should submit themselves unto the present power they were under in those severall Territories, what ever the power was for its kind; and this for the arguing their faithfulness unto those Powers, and their Christian faithfulness in so doing; see *1 Pet.* 2. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

These instances may beyond all exception, vindicate the person who is an English Subject, and hath his subsistence and livelihood in England, for his ingaging unto the now established Common-wealth of England, the tie of this relation being more naturall and fundamentall then those before mentioned: Hereunto might be added, of how good report it is, (*Philip.* 4. 8.) that in case any prisoners amongst us have liberty to go abroad, upon their parole, and ingaging themselves to their Goalers and Keepers to faithfulness; that they approve themselves unto them therein; how much more in the case in hand?

2. The second branch in the form of Engagement, is the Act of subscribing in its peculiar nature, and it is expressed in these words, [*I declare, and promise to be true and faithfull to, &c.*] Now this peculiar Act doth afford another ground to argue the reasonableness of the Engagement, according to Scripturall Reason: Sith truth and faithfulness in any persons in any concerns, doth hear well on all hands, as on the contrary, falshood and trechery doth hear ill. This may be manifested and evinced in these ensuing assertions.

1 God himself is glorified by his Attribute of faithfulness, *Deut.* 7. 9. *Psal.* 36. 5.

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2. Christ

2. Christ stileth himselfe the faithfull and true witnesse,
Apocal. 3. 14.

3. Gods gracious respect is unto faithfull ones, *Heb. 3. 2. 5.*
Mat. 25. 21. 23.

4. Faithfulnesse is a character of approved ones: See instances, *viz.*

1. A faithfull man fearing God above many, *Neh. 7. 2.*

2. A faithfull Priest, doing according to Gods heart,
1 Sam. 2. 35.

3. Faithfull with the Saints, ruling with God, *Hos. 11. 12.*

4. A faithfull Ambassador is health, *Prov. 13. 17.*

5. It is required of Stewards to be found faithfull,
1 Cor. 4. 2.

6. A faithfull and wise servant, *Mat. 24. 45.*

7. A faithfull Martyr, *Apocal. 2. 13. &c.*

5. Falshood and unfaithfulnesse is a character of the wicked,
Psal. 5. 9. as being,

1. Prohibited, *Exod. 23. 7:*

2. Reproved, *Psal. 120. 3.*

3. Punishable, *Deut. 19. 18, 19. &c.*

These particular assertions being duly weighed, are grounds and motives to attract and perswade evermore to act truly and faithfully, as the nature of the object doth also further require, nextly to be insisted on.

3. The object of the Act of subscribing the Engagement, doth give yet further ground of evidence and confirmation of the first Scripturall Reason, *viz.* [I declare and promise to be true and faithfull to the Common wealth of England.] Sith the Common wealth of England is the same Common-wealth that it hath been for very many ages and generations successively; as it may appeare divers wayes.

1. It is of the same English language, and native Mother tongue.

2. It is the same Continent, and hath the same borders and bounds.

3. It

3. It hath the same great Charter of its Laws [*Magna Charta.*]

4. It acteth in the doing of Justice and Judgment in the same way of open Courts at Westminster, and in the severall Counties of the Nation at Assizes, and Sessions, and inferior Judicatories; and these transactions are managed by the learned Judges, Justices of Peace, Stewards, Juries, and Witnesses, &c. as hath been antiently accustomed.

5. It professeth and establisheth the true Christian Religion, according to the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

6. And principally it enacteth Lawes by Parliamentary Power, and it onely, enacting some new Laws, and repealing some old Lawes, (*pro re nata*) as occasion and cause requireth, and as it hath been wont to do: And herein the very form of the Commonwealth consists.

Yea, and howbeit, there have been and are various conditions of persons, and also of wayes of governing by Britains, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, both in Civill and Ecclesiasticall Affairs unto this day, refining and reforming Laws and Government as need hath required; yet none of these variations may be said to abrogate or disannull the identity of the Commonwealth of England. It is true indeed, that as in some part heretofore, so in the later times very much that was amisse hath been amended not only in the expulsion of Antichrist in the branch in Queen *Elizabeths* time, but also in the root by this present Parliament; as also, much good hath been by the Parliament, in suppressing of arbitrary power, taking away the High Commission Court, Star-Chamber, Hierarchie, and superstitious monuments of Popish Idolatry, &c. but yet notwithstanding it is the same Common-wealth still, yea, and English blood and spirits are yet remaining amongst us.

It is in great part with us in England, as it was with the Commonwealth of Israel, Chroniched in the Canonick Scriptures of the Old Testament, *viz.* They were the same Commonwealth of Israel, from their first establishment to be a National Commonwealth in Sinai, *Exod. 19. 1.* &c. untill the utter ruine
of

of their Commonwealth, fore-told and prophesied of by our Saviour Christ, *Mat. 24.* and afterwards effected by *Vespasian*, the Roman Emperor, as may be seen in these instances :

1. They were all along of the same Hebrew language.
2. They had the same great Charter of *Moses* Lawes both for Civill and Church Affairs.
3. They had the same borders and bounds still reckoned on, albeit sometimes more or lesse extended or restrained.
4. They reformed amisses both in Church and State (as their condition did admit) as occasion was, and their hearts bent thereto.

5. And although they had also sundry conditions of persons and wayes of governing, namely,

1. In the Wildernesse by the hands of *Moses* and *Aaron*; see *Psal. 77. 20.*

2. In Canaan by *Judges* 450. years; see *Act. 13. 20.*

3. By Kings afterwards till the captivity, and these variously obtaining their regality; see Books of *Samuel*, *Kings* and *Chronicles*.

4. By variously conditioned men after the captivity neere 500. years, &c. and yet from *Moses* to *Herod* they were the Commonwealth of Israel; see *Luke 1. 5. -- 68. & cap. 2. 25.*

These instances being duly observed, there is just cause that English Patriots in their love and zeal of their native Country, should shew themselves to be true and faithfull to the Commonwealth of England, in whose hands soever the Government is established; and this the rather, because true Israelites indeed in whose spirits was no guile, (see *John 1. 47.*) were wont to be faithfull in their dayes to such their Commonwealth. Let some instances of a few such Worthies of the Lords be remembred also herein, who did demean themselves faithfully as present state required.

1. *Ioshua* and *Caleb* encouraging the Israelites in the Wildernesse, when many others discouraged them; see *Numb. 14. 6, 7.*

2. Congregation of Israel, when there was no King in Israel, on occasion of the horrid distemper mentioned, *Judg. 20. 1. &c.*

3. *David*

3. *David* a private man, when *Goliath* defied the Host of Israel, 1 Sam. 17. 32.

4. *Hushai* the Archite acting faithfully in the time of *Ab-solons* unnaturall rebellion, 2 Sam. 15. 32.

5. *Obediah* in the time of *Jezabels* persecuting malignity, 1 King. 18. 3, 4.

6. *Iehonadab* the son of *Rechab* adhering to *Iehu*, 2 Kings 10. 15.

7. *Shecaniah* stirring up *Ezra* to act in perplexed times, *Ezra* 10. 2, 3.

Certainly such examples ought to be presidents unto the people of God in England, to act as such faithfull servants of God did act in their generations.

4. Lastly, the modification and restriction of the object, viz: [*The Common-wealth of England, as it is now established without a King and House of Lords,*] being compared with such Texts of Scripture, as by just consequence are to be made use of, will strongly argue its establishment to be agreeable to the mind of God the Law-giver; so as therefore there is good reason for subscribing the Engagement: For this purpose let these three assertions implied in this modification of object, be well considered.

1. The Common-wealth of England, as it is now established without a King and House of Lords, is so established by the Parliament.

2. The Parliament that hath declared and settled the Common-wealth of England in a free State without a King and House of Lords, is the Sovereign Power in England.

3. There is no just cause of refusing to subscribe the Engagement, because of Common-wealths establishment without a King and House of Lords,

1 Assertion. The first of these Assertions may be manifested by the Parliaments Declaration, *March 17. 1648.* expressing the grounds of their proceedings, &c. of settling the present Government in the way of a free State: The Parliament Declaration containeth four remarkable Causes of such their proceedings, and settling the Government, to be viewed in a short Synopsis, viz.

1 Cause.

1. *Cause.* The first cause was in respect of Kingly Government, (set up in our Nation by the agreement of the people for their protection and better government, according to such Laws as they consented unto) which is taken away for these Reasons.

1. *Reason.* Kingly Power was perverted by most of the Trustees, and most notoriously by the late King, who by many degrees exceeded the rest. Such his vile miscarriage is exemplified in the Parliament Declaration, by about fifty undeniable pregnant instances, needlesse to insert. It were good that every English Patriot had the Declaration by him in these confused times to peruse frequently.

2. *Reason.* The Kings two eldest Sonnes appeared in actual arms against the Parliament, so as no hope of future security could be expected unto the Nation from them.

3. *Reason.* There is elder right of supreme power in the people of the Land, then was in the Kings children.

4. *Reason.* If any Right or Title belonged to the Kings eldest sonne, the same is forfeited by the Fathers treasonable Act; as in other cases, even in offices of Inheritance, it is wont.

5. *Reason.* The Kings younger children equally forfeited upon the same account.

6. *Reason.* It is in the same power and authority which at first erected a King for common good, and afterwards findeth him to pervert his Kingship to common evil; it is in their power, whether they will continue his Kingly power, or change it to a better.

7. *Reason.* God hath specially blessed free States, who formerly were oppressed by tyranny, as is seen in united Netherlands, and others.

8. *Reason.* There are manifold commodious advantages to people in Free States: Manifold oppressions and dammages are under Monarchy: Vast expense is wont to be by Court luxury and prodigality. Profuse Donations and pensions for the promoting Tyranny; yea, and the Court (being the nursery of vices, and corrupter of hopeful branches of noble Families) prevented in a Free State. See Declarat.

2. *Cause.*

2. *Cause.* The second cause of Parliament proceedings touched on in the Declaration, respecteth the taking away of the House of Lords, for just reasons, *viz.*

1. *Reason.* The Lords sate in an house by themselves, and did not represent the people, and therefore might be well spared.

2. *Reason.* They exercised a negative Vote, tending to obstruct much.

3. *Reason.* They exercised a juridicall power over the persons, and estates of all the Commons, whereof they were not competent Judges.

4. *Reason.* Their power did specially depend on the absoluteness of the King.

5. *Reason.* The Common-Wealth could not well beare their delays in times of exigency.

6. Liberty is left to such Lords, who have been, and shall be found faithfull, to choose, and to be chosen Representatives, as other competent persons have their right unto. See Declarat.

3. *Cause.* Thirdly, the Parliament giveth satisfactory answers to the obvious main objections against their proceedings, *viz.* Anticipat.

1. It was intended, as it was declared *April 1646.* for governing the Nation by King, Lords and Commons, in a confidence that the King and Peers would have applied themselves, as had been meet; but they wholly and obstinately failing therein, and there being no stipulation on both sides, it could not be esteemed a contract; so that the Commons did most justly after their intentions.

2. Although some Members of the House of Commons had some force on them (it having at any time rarely happened in times of Parliament, but some force more or lesse hath been exercised against them, or some of them, and they esteemed to be Parliament for all this) yet no breach of Priviledge can be charged upon the remaining part in the House, which remaining part did farre exceed such authorized number, who do make an House beyond all exception.

3. The Parliament hath declared that the Fundamentall Laws of the Nation are to be continued; as also Courts of Justice
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and Judicature in a due way. See Declaration.

4 *Cause*. Lastly, the Parliaments Declaration sheweth their just and well-grounded ends in the establishing the Commonwealth, as now it is without King and Lords: Let the Declaration it self be exactly skanned in its full and effectuall expressions, and it may appeare it was not force on some without the Parliament doors, but the force of right reason on the Members within the House, which hath so declared: How forcible are right words? See *Iob* 6.25.

II. *Affertion*. The second Affertion touching the Sovereign Power of the English Parliament is taken for granted, not only by the Parliament themselves, groundedly demonstrated in their Declaration above mentioned in the first Affertion, and likewise in their exercise of supreme power in issuing our Commissions both to subordinate Magistrates for the doing of justice, and to the Souldiery for defensive and offensive warres; but also it is taken for granted by others, rationall men in the Commonwealth, who have acted by their Commissions; and this from year to year of late whilest the King lived, as well as this present year, 1649. yea, and there are many who have published their minds touching this matter: This hath been done by Mr. *Prynne* (though now an adversary hereunto) in foure voluminous parts of one of his books, with a large Appendix thereunto, intituled, *The Sovereignie Power of Parliaments*, whither the Reader may be referred: only I doe observe hereabouts, That God the onely Law-giver, and Sovereign King of Kings, and all supreme powers, having been graciously pleased to preserve unto us in England the substance of our Commonwealth hitherto, surely he hath appointed and continued unto us the Law of Nature, contained in the Decalogue to be our rule of life in our severall capacities of inferiority and superiority, whether supreme or subordinate, as well in Civill Government, as in Church and Family; yea, to have a Magistracy to be keepers of both the Tables; see *Rom.* 13.4. compared with *Exod.* 19.6. & cap. 20.1. & 12. And therefore our trans- actions in England touching our Lawes, and the executing of them, are by lawfull commissioned persons of severall sorte
(otherwise

(otherwise the Law of Nature seemeth to fail) and so consequently are lawfully administred by them. Oh that all men fearing God amongst us, specially such as have complied with the Parliament, after the King his leaving the House, and withdrawing from it, would consider soberly and seriously hereof, and so take heed of daring to think, or speak, or act against those in Authority, lest they do incurre Gods fierce displeasure: See *Numb. 12. cap. 2 Pet. 2. 10. Psal. 2. 12. It is hard for any to kick against the pricks, Acts 9. 5. and to resist the Ordinance of God, Rom. 13. 2.*

III. *Affertion.* The third Assertion, That there is no just cause of refusing to subseribe the Engagement, in regard of the present establishment of the Common-wealth of England, without a King and House of Lords. It may be argued, as otherwise, so from the rule of our own practice, who doe profess our due respects to Parliaments, *viz.*

1. It was not taken to be prejudiciall, for dangerous to the Priviledges of Parliament, that the Lords spirituall (as they were stiled) were cashiered and expelled out of the House of Lords, albeit they had been called by Writ, and had formerly and very antiently been esteemed and reputed Members of that House.

2. It did not infringe the nature and being of the Parliament, that the King after a time with-drew himself totally from the House.

3. The Parliament did retain its perfect constitution and being when very many, yea, most of the Lords, and when very many of the Commons with-drew themselves, pretending to be a Parliament at Oxford, sith a competent number remained still in the House.

4. It is alledged out of approved Antiquaries, that in case all the Lords after a due Summons should fail to appeare and sit in the House, that their totall absence doth not, nor cannot hinder or nullifie the due Parliamentary proceedings, whereas it is destructive to the being of the Parliament, if a competent number of Commons constituted to make up an House, be absent, sith the Commons are the Representatives of the

people; see *Trynnes Sovereign Power of Parliament, Part 1. Pag. 43. Edit. 2.*

5. It is resolved and declared by the Parliament, that the King had not a negative Vote.

These five particular instances being duely marked, together with that which the Parliament hath declared, *March 17. 1648.* as above, may abundantly convince, that according to this third Assertion, there is no cause of just refusall to subscribe the Engagement to the Common-wealth of England, as it is now established: And so the first Argument justifying the faithfulness and conscionableness of the subscription, is fully concluded.

II. REASON.

Because subscribing the Engagement hath its due consistency and agreement with the main scope and intention of former Oaths, Protestations, and Covenants prae-ingaged in nationally unto the supreme Power of England, approved mostly on all hands; so that as right reason did then require the taking of them in their just sense, so doth the same reason now require to take the Engagement.

For the more effectually arguing the case by this reason, these Conclusions are to be opened and considered, *viz.*

1 *Conclusion.* It is presumed and taken for granted, that the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, the Protestations and solemn Covenants were made of lawfull things lawfully, and in the Lord, according to the sacred and divine Rule, *Thou shalt sweare the Lord liveth, in Truth, in Judgement, and in Righteousnesse, Jer. 4. 2.* For otherwise there is an undoubted nullity of them, *ipso facto*, sith no man ought to perform what is irrationally sworn, and is in it self unrighteous and unlawfull. Of this sinfull nature have been the unlawfull and unrighteous Oaths and Subscriptions of many, many Ministers in this Land in the times of prevailing Episcopacy, and superstitious conformity; for which things sake the Land mourneth, *Jer. 23. 10.* And therefore the swearers of Canonick obedience of the &c. Oath, and the Subscribers, willingly (*& ex animo*) to the Articles by Cannon required to be subscribed unto, have cause to set themselves

selves to sorrow godly, so as they may evidence their repentance not to be repented of, which will produce the effects of godly sorrow mentioned, 2 Cor. 7. 11. for otherwise the Lord will not hold them guiltlesse that have taken his name in vain, Exod. 20. 7.

2. *Conclusion.* The main and chief scope and end of the oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance formerly; and of the Protestation and Covenant lately, and likewise of the Engagement at the present was, and is the just safety and preservation of the Commonwealth of England, against illegall and violent usurpations and attempts, whether of Forreiners or Natives, of any sort and condition of persons in what kind or notion soever, as may appear by the Statutes, Acts, Declarations, and orders of those in Supreme Authority, that have required the people of the Land to submit unto the taking and subscribing of them.

3. *Conclusion.* It is taken for granted that the Parliament Party who ordered the Protestation first, and the Covenant afterwards to be taken, did apprehend and judge that the said Protestation and Covenant, did not contradict the Oath of Supremacy and Allegiance; neither yet did the Covenantiers understand any contrariety therein (however the Malignant Cavaliers and Royalists might possibly think otherwise) but rather that there was a legall consistency and agreement in their sense and meaning; inasmuch as at the same time, when occasion required, there was a taking of the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, notwithstanding the taking of the Covenant, as it is well known. For it was not the person of *Charles Stuart* that was sworn unto, but his Kingly legal Office, to be administred by him according to Law for the safety of the people; Because any mans person (and therefore the Kings also) being subject to such occasional accidents and incident condition, as may justly disfit and disable not only for governing, but also from being preferred alive; there is therefore no just reason of swearing fealty simply & absolutely, but in the Lord only, & according to Law. Now there is the same reason of legall consistency and agreement with the Engagement, and with the Protestation and Covenant, as there was of the consistency and agreement of the
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Protestation and Covenant; with the Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance. And albeit severall sorts of persons exercised the supreme power at severall times, *viz.* The King before the Parliament was called, The King, Lords and Commons a space together after the first sitting of the Parliament; The Commons alone at the present, yet notwithstanding the safety of the Commonwealth was all along propounded, and to be prosecuted, and still is.

4. *Conclusion.* Every lawfull Oath, Protestation, Covenant, and Engagement, are undoubtedly sacred Obligations, and ought to be kept and preserved inviolably. For so God 1. Commandeth, *Levit.* 19. 12. 2. Approveth, *Psal.* 15. 4. 3. Threatneth otherwise, *Exod.* 20. 7. 4. Yea and punisheth breaches when it is otherwise, 2 *Chron.* 36. 13. *Ezek.* 17. 15. &c. whence it followeth, that Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance; yea, and the Protestation and the Covenant formerly taken, have in the maine scope and end of them, an obligatory force still, even the safety of the Commonwealth, as hath been already declared.

5. *Conclusion.* Subscribing the Engagement (having it's legall consistency and agreement with former Oaths of Supremacy and Allegiance, and also with the Protestation and Covenant) doth engage to perform and fulfill, what in the main of the said Oaths, Protestation and Covenant was engaged; even the approving truth and faithfulnessse to the Commonwealth, whereas refusing to subscribe the Engagement argueth a breach, at least a disposition unto the breach of those Oaths, Protestation and Covenant.

These five Conclusions, as they have been laid open, are a sufficient way and means of making good our second reason. Let us have grace whereby we may serve the Lord acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29.

III. REASON.

Because the profit and advantage of subscribing the Engagement, may most probably by Gods blessing, be much every way. See this in some instances.

1. Preven-

1. Prevention of the ruine of the Common-wealth, which may be occasioned and caused through disagreement and distance in point of just and requisite compliances. For when a Kingdome is divided against it self, it is brought to desolation, and every City or house divided against it self shall not stand. See *Mat.* 12. 25. It is a token of Gods great controversie, when he setteth Egyptians against Egyptians, to fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, City against City, and Kingdome against Kingdome. See *Isa.* 19. 2. It was a difficult and perplexed state of times in the Common-wealth of Israel, when civill warres were betwixt *David* and the house of *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* 2. & 3. cap. but bettered & more happy when matters were composed and a league made, 2 *Sam.* 5. 1, 2, 3. And so it was an exceeding distempered state of times of late in England for some years together, when their just Liberties were endeavoured by the Parliament and their Forces (protesting and covenanting thereunto) that then others of the Nation were up in arms for tyranny, and protested for it. But the most infinitely wise and gracious God, having now been pleased to grant deliverance from Tyranny unto the Nation, by the Parliament and their Forces, why should not people come in and engage together, as did the Israelites above mentioned, 2 *Sam.* 5. 1, 2, 3. Oh that we of this Nation were affected as *David* was (most probably on that occasion) to say or sing heartily, *Psal.* 133. 1. *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! &c.*

2. Setled peace and prosperity (which religiously affected Common-wealths-men ought to pray and seek for. See *Psal.* 122. 6, 7, 8.) is likest to be effected and promoted in the Common-wealth (as otherwise, so) by mutuall engaging to be true and faithfull thereunto. For hence good and speciall encouragement may be to the inhabitants to exercise husbandry, trade, merchandize, building, planting, &c. there being in such case opportunity to live quietly and peaceably without any disturbance, and to enjoy the administration of Justice and Judgement, as occasion shall require, even as it fared with the flourishing Common-wealth of Israel, at such times when they had
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rest in the dayes of the Judges, albeit they then had no King :
see *Judg.* 3. 11. 30.

3. Welfare of Church state (which consisteth singularly in
speciall united combinations of single Congregations in their
Presbyteries, and of Presbyteries combined in Synods, lesser or
greater; see *Acts* 2. 47. *Mat.* 18. 17. 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. *Acts* 15. 2. 4.
6. &c.) shall be notably and effectually accomplished by such
Engagement : For thereby such as are Church-Officers, and
likewise such as are Church-members, shall be disposed in their
spirits, and composed in their minds and hearts, to thinke and
act humbly and soberly, as becometh members of the mysticall
body, whereof Christ Jesus is the head ; see *Rom.* 12. 3, 4, 5, 6.
1 *Cor.* 1. 10. whereas when divisions do take place, then unavoi-
dable offences and scandalls are occasioned, to the Churches ve-
ry great damage, *Rom.* 16. 17. Alas, alas! how can it be much ex-
pected, that Presbytery shal be generally settled throughout Eng-
land, when so many as do pretend to affect and desire it, are not
only contrary minded to their brethren, who should combine
together in severall associations, but do also walk contrary to
the supreme power, who are the Churches nursing Fathers, and
to whom it belongeth to establish and patronize Church Go-
vernment; see *Rom.* 13. 4.

4. Silencing the mouthes of ignorant and foolish prophane
men (who are corrupt, and forward to be clamorously talkative,
and babbling against the wayes of God and his people ; see
Prov. 9. 13. but it is Gods will, that by a due Christian doing
their ignorance and folly should be stopped, 1 *Pet.* 2. 15.) shall
be commodiously attained by a unanimous concurrence of bre-
thren to ingage and act for common and publike safety, even
unto the vexing, disheartning and daunting of adversaries; see
the exemplification hereof in a pregnant instance of the State
of the Jewish Common-wealth after their returne from the
captivity, and had no King at such time, applying themselves
to reforme amisses, and repaire breaches, when gruded at, and
opposed greatly; for whereas all sorts set themselves in their
standings unto the work, as we have a full Catalogue of their
names, and order of their building the wall, *Neh.* 3. yea, of the
Tekoites

Tekoites repairing, though their Nobles put not their neck to the work of the Lord, *Neb. 3. 5.*) it came to passe, that *Sanballat*, and *Tobiah* the Ammonite, were wondrously and strangely exanimated and confounded thereat; see *Neb. 4. 1. &c.*

5. Rejoycing of the spirits of Christians at home and abroad, both in our own Land, and in neighbour Churches and Countreys, and their glorifying of God in such case, shall be the consequent of such Engagement, which is no small benefit: How Christians at home are taken and affected, when with one accord there is a joyning and continuing together, and what is the fruit thereof, we may see declared *Act. 2. 42. -- 46, 47.* yea, and abroad likewise, *Act. 15. 31. Gal. 1. 23, 24.* That comfortable Prophecy and gracious Promise respecting Gospel-times more specially, made mention of *Isaiah 44. 5.* viz. *One shall say, I am the Lords, and another shall call himselfe by the God of Iacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himselfe by the name of Israel:* And another mentioned, *Zach. 8. 23.* Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, in those dayes it shall come to passe, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the Nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you: Even these Prophecies and Promises may be alluded unto by way of resemblance, to denote the advantages by Englishmens concurrence unto the publike good and welfare of the Nation.

This fivefold profit insisted on, may well be an attractive to allure, and perswade to seek and follow after it, sith the merchandize thereof is better then the merchandize of silver, and the gaine thereof is better then gold; it is more precious then Rubies, and nothing that can be desired, is to be compared unto it. And thus far of the three Reasons: And a threefold cord is not quickly broken, *Eccles. 4. 12.*

SECT. IV.

Objections against subscribing the Engagement, satisfactorily answered.

Although that which hath been already declared in the true stating of the Account of subscribing the Engagement, and

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also in the evincing the truth and faithfulness of it by the three Reasons which have been hitherto insisted on, is of full sufficiency to give satisfaction to such persons as are cordially inclined to a love of truth and peace; yet notwithstanding because there are some Zealots found (having [therein] a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, *Rom. 10. 2.*) who at least do think that they do God good service, in refusing to act in that which they are warrantably called unto, (even as *Peter* the Apostle did, *Acts 10. 1* &c.) and in acting contrary unto the way, which it is meet they should walk in, (as the Apostle *Paul* sometime thought he ought to do, *Act. 16. 9.*) It shall not therefore be grievous unto me (and I trust it will not be irksome to the Reader) to adde a few lines more for the further convincing of obstinate gain-sayers, and for the undeceiving of tractable minded persons, who are willing to be instructed in righteousness; and this is to be done in answering some Objections made against the Subscribing of the Engagement.

I. *Object.* The generality of all sorts of persons in London, yea, and throughout the whole land, are disaffected unto this subscribing.

Ans. It is no good argument against it, because it is said that it is generally disaffected; as it were no good argument for it, if it should be said, that it were generally approved, sith it is not simply to the commendation or discommendation of a course that it is generally observed, or not observed; for sometimes a righteous way is generally spoken against, see *Act. 28. 22.* and sometimes a notorious sinfull way is generally cried up with great acclamation; see *Act. 19. 34.* And yet notwithstanding it is well known, that very many of all sorts in the Land, besides the supreme power requiring it, are well affected unto it, even reverend Judges, faithfull justices, knowing Lawyers, understanding Soldiers, judicious Preachers, and conscientious religious People, &c.

II. *Object.* Subscription unto the Engagement is refused not only by malignant Cavaliers and Royalists, &c. but also generally by Covenantiers and Presbyterians in London Province, and likewise throughout the Land.

Ans. 1. It were to be wished affectionately, that this Objection

on might not be declared in Gath, to the joycing and exulting of the Canaanite and Perizzite, who do yet dwell in the Land. See *Micah. 1. 10. Gen. 13. 7.*

2. It doth not simply, nor yet justly at all reflect disgracefully either on the Presbytery, or on the solemn Covenant, that some or many persons who have conformed to Presbytery, and Covenant, do now shew themselves unconformable to the Engagement; sith it is no new thing for many to cleave unto others by flatteries. See *Dan. 11. 34.* There were false brethren brought into Churches, and amongst the true brethren. See *Galat. 2. 4.*

3. Albeit the Covenant and the Engagement being both of them rightly understood, can well agree together, (as hath been cleared in the second reason of this account) yea and there is nothing in Presbytery foundeth of any discrepancy; so as neither Presbytery nor Covenant is any way trencched on by engaging; yet notwithstanding, sith Presbytery is of Ecclesiasticall cognizance, and Engagement is unto civill Power; this objection therefore beareth no proportion to the case in hand.

4. Many Ministers and people (through vulgar weaknesse, and too great a degree of time-serving sinister respects) have been apt to Vote and Act after the mind of some eminent ring-leadersto faction (as well as by eminent Reformers unto good waies: See *Josiahs* daies) as is to be seen in that preference of *Barabbas* before Christ, through the perswasion of the chief Priests and Elders, *Mat. 27. 20.* How many Ministers were there in prelaticall times, who did swear canonically, and subscribe implicitly, who yet did change also implicitly with the times, covenanting against former waies? Thus it was also with many former conforming, and late covenanting people following their guides. Not long since there were very many (who have professed Christs way of Presbytery) who did subscribe Attestations implicitly, both in London Province, in Lancashire, in Shropshire, in Cheshire, and in other Counties, touching severall Opinions, and books, and the Authors of them scarce known unto them in the very titles, much lesse read and weighed by them (I speak what I know of severall of them) but were drawn and perswaded thereunto by a few chief sticklers and promoters in those affairs. Whence it followeth, that it is farre the lesse considerable, that a multitude is pretended unto in the case in hand:

5. It is undoubtedly true, notwithstanding that very many faithfull Presbyterians, and conscientious Covenantiers do subscribe the Engagement (though some others refuse to do it) and yet no advantage is to be made of the number of the Presbyterians, or Covenantiers argumentatively, who subscribe the Engagement. It is probable enough that many such may have been mightily swayed thereunto. An estimate is to be made by the just reason, and not by the great number of those that subscribe the Engagement.

III. *Object.* Some of the good old Non-conformists, do refuse to subscribe the Engagement.

Ans. 1. And some of the old Non-conformists, who conscientiously refused to subscribe some of the Articles, canonically requiring subscription to them, (but then refused not to subscribe according to the Law of the Land, provided in such case; See *Eliz. 13. 12.*) even those non-subscribers can with good conscience subscribe the Engagement.

2. It must needs be acknowledged, that the good old Non-conformists (who as *Judah* in evill times, ruled with God, and were faithfull amongst the Saints, when *Ephraim* compassed him about with lies, and the house of *Israel* with deceit. See *Hos. 11. 12.*) are men subject to passions and error, as well as others, *Humanum est errare*. Let God be true, and every man a liar, &c. See *Rom. 3. 4.* It is a known and lamented case, how temptation prevailed too much with sundry professed Non-conformists in the times of Episcopacy, occasioning them to shrink and give in, either through fear of men, or love of the world, or for serving the times, after they had some waies professed otherwise: yea, and this no doubt came to passe through divine permission for their humbling, and that they might better know what was in their own hearts, it was in this case with them, as it had been with some faithfull servants of God; who were duely affected to Presbyteriall and Synodical principles, and yet by occasion sometime failed to walk evenly therein, viz. The Apostle *Peter* at Antioch withdrew himself from the Gentiles, (howbeit the Synodicall decree was otherwise, *Acts 15. 1.* &c. and as *David Dickson* interpreteth in case in hand, on *Galat. 2. 11.*) yea, and other Jews dissembled likewise, inso much as *Barnabas* also was carried away with their dissimulation. But the Apostle

Apostle *Paul* adhering to the Synodical decree, *stood* *Peter* *Galat.* 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. yea, and the Apostle *Peter* afterward making mention by occasion of the Apostle *Paul* calleth him, *beloved brother Paul*, and commendeth his wife and faithfull deportment. See 2 *Pet.* 3. 15, 16. So well could the blessed Apostles act and submit, and agree in Presbyterian waies, according to scripture, when they were themselves. Oh that we could duly observe and become advertised hereby, who approved our selves, conscientious Non-conformists under Prelaticall tryalls. But to return to the answer more nearly after this short digression; Let it be taken notice, that albeit some weaknesse do break out from some old Non-conformists, yet it concerneth them, as well as those who hitherto escape such temptations, to set our selves to walk by Scripture Rule, to be sober and watchfull in all things, for the approving the goodnesse of our consciences, willing in all things to live honestly. See *Heb.* 13. 18.

III. *Object.* A Presbyterian Minister, and ancient Non-conformist, being now grown aged above sixty year; howbeit through the grace of God, he approved himself in the whole course of his Ministry hitherto, not only in holding fast the forme of sound words in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, but also in withstanding Prelaticall subscription, and superstitious conformity, unto suspension, and exile, &c. yet now through infirmity of age may fail, and so consent to subscribe the Engagement.

Answer. 1. It is both possible and probable, and sure also, (through the grace and faithfulness of him that hath promised) that those who are planted in the house of God, shall still bring forth fruit in old age, *Psa.* 92. 13, 14. as having by reason of use, their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. See *Heb.* 5. 14. Let wisdom, be justified of her children, and praised likewise for free grace; yea and for confidence therein.

2. Albeit, God sometimes taketh away the understanding of the aged, *Job* 12. 20. so as they do not alway understand judgement, *Job* 32. 9. yet sometimes it may come to passe, that aged ones may have naturall vigor and parts for going out, and coming in in their callings, as well as they had, when they were younger, *Jos.* 14. 11. Yea, and ordinarily it is an argument for challenging respect unto what is said or done, when it cometh from

from the aged. The Apostle *Paul* in pleading a matter with *Philemon*, useth this argument to perswade the rather, because even *Paul* the aged did move therein. *Philem* 9.ver.

3. In the year 1614. an aged Minister of an hoary head, and silver hairs (*M. Tilecoat* by name of *B.M.*) and my self then a young man, did both of us together receive a sentence of suspension from the exercise of our Ministry, for our refusing Hierarchicall subscription and conformity to Ceremonies, declared against us by the then Chancellor of Chester, (under which we remained for a time) who added to that our suffering, his mocking and jeering of us, that the one of us was very aged, and the other very young, as if therefore our witness-bearing to the truth of the Gospel were lesse to be regarded. And yet that which the Chancellor uttered reproachfully, became unto me for confirmation and encouragement, having the good and grave old Father to be exemplary; as others of good note in Cheshire did then also judge it well might be usefull to me; whatever now some do prejudicially conceit of the aged.

4. It is the lesse marvell, that some do detract from the authority of the aged and hoar-headed, whenas the same persons are also self-willed and presumptuous in despising and speaking evill of Government and Supreme Power, (*2 Pet.* 2.10.) whereas yet notwithstanding, God hath revealed in his word that it ought to be otherwise. See *Levit.* 19.32. *Rom.* 13.7.

V. Object. It is doubted that an insinaring danger may lurk in the promise declared of being faithfull to the Common-wealth, forasmuch as the sense of the word faithful may peradventure be strained afterwards to intangle the subscriber.

Ans. 1. One would scarcely have thought that any man of common capacity to understand English, much lesse that any knowing Christian, and least of all that any Minister of the Gospel, could have had such a scruple; sith neither it's notation, nor the obvious use of the word, as it is either in the Scripture (which is full of it) or as it is in ordinary speech and acception amongst men, can give any rise for such a groundlesse scrupulous fancy.

2. A doting about strifes of words produceth no profit, but strife, envy, railings, evill surmisings, pervere disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, even to the subverting

ring of the hearers; see 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 5. & 1 *Tim.* 3. 14. let therefore the godly wise Christians and Ministers, avoid such questions about words clear in themselves, studying to shew themselves approved unto God, &c. 1 *Tim.* 2. 15.

3. Let such wordy Questionists remember that the pious and prudent contrivers of the Directory for the publike Worship of God throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland, established by our Parliament, in that part of it which directeth about the solemnization of Marriage, they thought it meet that the persons to be married together should promise mutually to be faithfull unto one another: In the Directory for the Ordination of Ministers, it is Ordered, that such as shall be ordained, do declare a promise of faithfulness, as well as of other duties, in the exercise of their Ministry. I do hence demand, whether persons to be married, or Ministers to be ordained, should, the one sort of them scruple the accomplishment of their marriage, or the other sort scruple their Ordination, because of the Engagement to be faithfull in their relative conditions? and whether they should surcease rather therefrom upon a phantasticall conceit, that the sense of the word *faithfull* may be strained to some insnaring afterwards? I conclude therefore, that as in Domestical and Ecclesiastical relations there is a requisite of promising to be true and faithful. so it ought to be likewise in the relation in the Commonwealth, that there be an Engagement of faithfulness thereunto: If any man be otherwise minded touching being faithfull in the mentioned relations in Family, Church and Commonwealth, surely he seemeth to give ground of just jealousy, that he meaneth not fairly; that I say no more.

VI. Objt. There was a liberty granted and directed by Order of Parliament, that Preachers in giving of the Covenant should explain it, and accordingly the Preacher explained it in such sense, as he apprehends stands not with his freedom of conscience to subscribe the Engagement.

Ans. 1. The liberty allowed and directed unto Preachers for explaining the Covenant, ought to be understood of such explaining it, as stood with the just and genuine sense of it, as all rational men will easily acknowledge: If any Preachers took a liberty otherwise, they did abuse their liberty; yea, it was a collusion and imposture

imposture in the Preacher whoever he was, to put a sense thereon of his owne not agreeing thereto, frustrating what in him lay, the end of the Covenant and the taking of it.

2. They that thus object, do not speak out what the sense of the Preacher was that he gave of the Covenant inconsistent with the Engagement, so as it cannot be expected that a full and satisfactory answer should be made thereto; his sense being in the dark, may be reputed an act of darknesse, albeit confused and uncertain speech be of it in the streets at noon day.

3. This Objection giveth occasion to suspect that some persons (yea, some who pretend for Presbytery, but are loosely minded thereunto, such such do thus object) do make an advantage to put the Covenant to their own sense, to free themselves thereby from the sacred bonds of it in its own sense and meaning.

4. Let such Objecters be pleased for the undeceiving themselves and their adherents, plainly and punctually (in their own consciences and conferences with their Associates) answer these demands without any tergiversation, for arguing their sincerity towards God and towards men about the Covenant.

1. Whether the Covenant was not obligatory in its due sense and meaning in every article of it, as well as in some branches of some of the Articles more specially affected?

2. Whether there were not some main things primarily, and other things subserviently covenanted? And what those main things, and what the subservient things were? that thus truth and faithfulness be discerned hereabouts.

3. Whether the chief ends of the Covenant were not Reformation, and defence of Religion, and the safety of the People?

4. Whether the honour and happiness of the King was absolutely covenanted, albeit he should remain obstinate in his tyranny, and in other unnaturall capitall crimes, unto which God had appointed temporall death?

5. Whether the grand Priviledge of Parliament, unto which others are subservient, be not, that above forty members of the House of Commons acting freely in the House, doe continue the being of the House of Parliament? And consequently, whether by vertue of the Covenant such House of Commons ought not to be acknowledged the Parliamentary supreme Power?

FINIS.